



The Consumers' Voice

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March 22, 2004

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: WT Docket No. 02-55

Dear Chairman Powell:

Consumers Voice, a national membership organization, is concerned about a growing public safety issue impacting the ability of emergency first responders to react effectively to crises. On behalf our membership, we urge your agency to immediately address and resolve a serious issue that poses a threat to public safety and security in our nation: radio interference in the 800 MHz spectrum band.

First responders place their lives on the line everyday, responding to fires, floods and matters of homeland security. Their ability to arrive quickly to crises is especially critical to seniors who rely more heavily on emergency services. But first responders' timely arrival is contingent upon having reliable and clear communications. Unfortunately, this is not always the case, as reports of public safety radio interference are dramatically on the rise.

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As you know, the fundamental cause of this interference is the close proximity and incompatibility of public safety, private wireless, and commercial wireless operations within the 800 MHz band of radio spectrum. Public safety communications is affected significantly since most of their communications infrastructure operates within the 800 MHz band. Consumers Voice is concerned about the impact this problem is having on the safety of our nation's communities.

The plan pending before the FCC that would rearrange first responders' and commercial wireless' radio frequencies without any costs to taxpayers is our best chance to solve the issue of interference while enhancing public safety and addressing the concerns of senior citizens.

This plan, known as the Consensus Plan, moves proactively to solve public safety radio interference from commercial systems and also provides public safety with additional 800 MHz spectrum, thus reducing congestion.

We have reviewed other plans but because of their reactive approach to interference, we cannot support them. Lives are at stake when communications are garbled during medical emergencies, accidents, and other tragedies.

Inaction threatens the safety of our members, their families, our nation's first responders, and all Americans. Now is the time for decisive action. Anything less endangers us all.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rochelle Davis". The ink is a dark, slightly brownish color. The signature is fluid and personal, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Rochelle Davis
Executive Director